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Lawyer Says Snowden Will Keep Pledge

By The Moscow Times

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A Russian lawyer advising Edward Snowden said the National Security Agency leaker had agreed to fulfill his pledge not to hurt U.S. interests if he was granted asylum in Russia.

Anatoly Kucherena said he met with Snowden last Tuesday to discuss with him the procedures involved in filing the asylum request, which he submitted on that day.

Kucherena said in an interview Friday that once the Federal Migration Service issued a temporary pass to Snowden after receiving his asylum request, he would be able to move about freely while awaiting the final decision. He said the Federal Migration Service normally issued such a document within seven days.



AP

Anatoly
Kucherena

The migration agency has three months to consider an asylum request, according to Russian law.

Snowden has been stuck in the transit zone of Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport since he arrived on a flight from Hong Kong on June 23. He has received offers of asylum from Venezuela, Nicaragua and Bolivia, but, because his U.S. passport has been revoked, the logistics of reaching whichever country he chooses are complicated.

Once Snowden gets the formal confirmation from the migration agency, he can freely choose his residence but will have to notify the authorities of his location, Kucherena said.

He said the fugitive told him that he had been staying at a capsule hotel in the airport's transit zone, although hordes of reporters that besieged Sheremetyevo to search for him could not find him there.

Putin has warned that Snowden could be granted asylum on condition he agrees not to hurt U.S. interests — implying that the American would have to stop leaking material on Washington's spying efforts.

Kucherena said he asked Snowden if he would fulfill that condition, and the fugitive told him he could meet the demand.

"I talked to him about this and I asked him: What do you think, will you continue your subversive activity, will you unmask special services of the USA or not in the light of what Mr. Putin said?" Kucherena said. "He told me that he would not do that and that he could fulfill President Putin's request."

Asked if Snowden would be held responsible for others' future publication of material he has already leaked, Kucherena was cryptic. "I can't exclude anything. Everything that is happening around Mr. Snowden ... all this is unpredictable," he said, adding once again that he expected Snowden to keep his word not to hurt U.S. interests.

Kucherena added that Putin's request apparently reflects his desire to maintain normal relations with the U.S.

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